Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

20 April 2018
English
Original: Arabic

Second session
Geneva, 23 April–4 May 2018

Specific regional issues and implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East

Working paper submitted by the Group of Arab States

1. The international community has acknowledged the importance of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world. Such zones serve many purposes, the most important of which are strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and achieving nuclear disarmament, and would bring us closer to the ultimate objective of achieving and maintaining international peace and security. The Group of Arab States is concerned at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from any use of nuclear weapons. That concern was expressed in the outcomes of the conferences concerning this matter that were held in Norway, Mexico and Austria, and in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

2. The nuclear-weapon-free zones that have been established in several regions of the world have furthered the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Group reaffirms that tangible steps and immediate measures must be taken towards the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, so that the positive effects of such zones can be felt in that region.

3. The Group of Arab States calls on the three States that sponsored the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to assume their responsibilities in respect of the implementation of that resolution, which was one the key outcomes of that Conference and the basis on which the Parties decided, by consensus, to extend the Treaty indefinitely. The Group reaffirms its resolve to make every effort to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East region, with a view to enhancing the potential for achieving peace, security and stability.

4. Neither the 1995 resolution on the Middle East nor the practical steps that were endorsed by the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons have been implemented. At the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Group of Arab States proposed an initiative to break the deadlock that received the unreserved support of the vast majority of the States Parties to the Treaty. However, three States, two of which are sponsors and depositaries of the 1995

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resolution on the Middle East, prevented the 2015 Review Conference from adopting a final document in order to serve the interests of Israel, a State that is not a party to the Treaty. That course of action has adversely affected the credibility and sustainability of the regime established by the Treaty.

5. The Group reaffirms its commitment to the outcomes and outputs concerning the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East region that were adopted at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences. It hopes that the international community will support the implementation of those outcomes and outputs.

6. The Group is disappointed that the international community has failed to fulfil its responsibilities in that regard, justifying its position by saying that such a zone should be established freely by the States concerned, in order to avoid putting any pressure on Israel, which is the only State in the Middle East that has not acceded to the Treaty and that refuses to place its nuclear installations under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Moreover, Israel refuses to implement the relevant international resolutions, ignores the resolutions adopted at the Review Conferences and impedes all serious efforts to conduct preparatory negotiations concerning the convening of a conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

7. The international community's failure to fulfil its commitments concerning the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East has had repercussions, perpetuated a policy of ambiguity regarding the nuclear safety and security standards that Israel has put in place at its nuclear facilities, and increased tension and instability in the Middle East. The international community's failure to fulfil its commitments in that regard has also impeded efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction around the world, and that, in turn, has an adverse effect on the international non-proliferation regime.

8. The Group has taken note of the working papers concerning the 1995 resolution on the Middle East that have been submitted thus far in preparation for the 2020 Review Conference, and it looks forward to seeing the States Parties to the Treaty, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, and even more particularly the sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, translate their commitments into tangible steps and immediate measures to implement that resolution. The Group also calls for the implementation of Security Council resolution 487 (1981), pursuant to which Israel must place all its nuclear facilities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime, without any precondition and any negotiations, and calls upon Israel to accede to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

9. The Group of Arab States reaffirms its willingness to cooperate and to endorse working papers, ideas or arrangements that further efforts to achieve the goal of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in accordance with the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

10. The Group trusts that the work of the Second Preparatory Committee will lead to further efforts to set out a defined path towards the establishment a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations and with commitments that were agreed upon pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Treaty. The Group hopes that the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will adopt a final document that responds to its requests and is implementable.

11. In view of the foregoing, the Group trusts that, in its recommendations to the 2020 Review Conference, the Preparatory Committee will:

(a) Stress the need to implement Security Council resolution 487 (1981) and draw attention to the importance of achieving the universality of the Treaty, as stated in the Final Documents of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences, and in particular the call made therein upon States that have not acceded to the Treaty to do so as non-nuclear-weapon States and to place all of their nuclear facilities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime.

(b) Affirm that nuclear-weapon-States must fulfil their responsibility to provide the assistance required and make every effort to bring about the early establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in accordance with resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and Review Conferences, as well as other relevant resolutions, and point out that the Security Council, in view of its obligation to maintain international peace and security, bears responsibility for establishing that zone.

(c) Urge Israel to accede to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State, place all its facilities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime, eliminate its entire stockpile of nuclear weapons and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

(d) Call upon all States Parties to put pressure on Israel and compel it to comply with internationally binding resolutions and accede to the Treaty; reiterate the call that IAEA made upon Israel in 1991 to comply with Security Council resolution 487 (1981), which provides that all Israeli nuclear facilities must be placed under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime; and call for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, with a view to achieving the objective set out in paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), which was adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, and in keeping with the relevant General Assembly resolutions adopted annually by consensus.

(e) Call upon the international community to fulfil its responsibilities with regard to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East concerning the establishment a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction by convening a conference on the establishment of such a zone, in accordance with the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and in implementation of the outcomes of the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences.

(f) Note that the Group of Arab States reaffirms that saying nuclear-weapon-free zones should be established freely by the States concerned does not mean that the international community can abrogate its responsibilities, and that the relevant international instruments can be disregarded.

(g) Emphasize the role of the international community and its responsibility to make it easier to take practical measures in the relevant forums, with a view to making progress towards the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and that the international community must take appropriate action in response to any measures that preclude achieving that objective.

(h) Note that the Group of Arab States deeply regrets the failure of the States that co-sponsored the 1995 resolution concerning the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East to fulfil the commitments they have undertaken, as set out in the 2010 plan of action, and that the Group reaffirms its readiness to endorse working papers, ideas or arrangements that further efforts to achieve the goal of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in accordance with the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.